

ABSTRACT

The invention provided herein includes novel gram negative bacteria cells containing the *Hte* mutation. Other aspects of the invention include methods for rendering gram negative bacterial cells bearing the *Hte* region, such as *E. coli* cells competent for DNA transformation using any of a variety of competency inducing procedures. The competent cells of the subject invention may be frozen so as to provide for prolonged storage.

10

15

20

25

30

35

08846996 " 050197"